

DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

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State Advisory Council on the Education of Children With Disabilities

Five Seasons Sports Club, 96th Street

Indianapolis, Indiana

April 20, 2001

Members in attendance: Gary Bates, Brett Bollinger, Maureen Greer, John Nally, Jackie Pitman, Mary Ramos, Elaine Scaife, David Schmidt, Deborah Winchester, Marcia Johnson, J. Brett Lewis, Julie Swaim, Terry Huser.

Members absent: Bob Marra, Janet Corson, Rose Black, Cathlene Hardy-Hansen, Carolyn Heier, Becky Kirk

Interpreter: Rob Tape, Lynn Frye

Guests: Cheryl Corning, Steve Wornhoff,

Division staff in attendance: Brenda Alyea, Paul Ash, Becky Bowman, Cindy Conway, Susan Miner, Constance Rahe, Demaris Stewart, Sandra Scudder

David Schmidt called the meeting to order at 9:35. He asked that individuals introduce themselves. He then asked to have members review the November minutes. Gary Bates moved to accept the minutes, Elaine Scaife seconded. The minutes were accepted with no revisions noted.

Paul Ash described the monitoring process that the Division uses for local planning districts. A decision had to be made to develop a monitoring system which is broad, frequent or in depth. It was felt the system should represent at least two areas. It is felt that it is broad because it covers all 189 federal indicators and that it is frequent because it occurs annually. It may not be as in depth as we would like. The Division is still identifying ways to make the process more in depth.

The Federal office calls it continuous improvement monitoring. The process has 189 indicators in four cluster areas of parent involvement, free appropriate public education, transition, and general supervision. The Federal Office requires that each state have a steering committee to assist in the development of the monitoring process. States have been encouraged to use their advisory councils in this capacity since the membership of the council provides a means for a broad dissemination.

Previously states were asked to send information to Washington and then a monitoring meeting date would be determined. Now states do an annual self assessment and based on the results of

that assessment, visits may or may not be made by the federal monitors. There will be sanctions for states who do not implement IDEA 97. The monitoring is now continuous as opposed to a cyclical schedule, stakeholders are involved at both state and local levels with the self assessment. The self assessment process has proven to be a struggle to implement. There have been two self assessment academies to provide training to states. Monitoring is now data driven and is a public process. Parent involvement, FAPE, Transition, General Supervision are the four categories the self assessment must address. Indiana is utilizing data that is already collected to address these four areas. There is technical assistance available and there are consequences for non compliance. Indiana has gone the longest between monitoring visits which is viewed as a positive. We will be monitored next year by OSEP. There must be public meetings as part of the federal monitoring visit. How those meetings will be conducted has not yet been determined.

Indiana has modeled our local monitoring after the federal process. The first year monitoring was based on the OSEP monitoring was last year. Indiana has 92 indicators consolidated from the 189 federal indicators. This was accomplished by reducing the duplication found in the federal process. Indiana developed a statistical snapshot with 13 sections for data about the state and individual districts. This information is reported back to the local districts. The Teacher of Record data is reviewed to look for red flags and to confirm if they are involved with the students on their caseload. To date, all but two CIM reports have been reviewed and accepted for this year. Additional items to be added to the review for this year are an update on the Juvenile Justice Plans and a meeting with the local steering committee to review the local self assessment before it comes to our office.

The in depth aspect begin through validation visits to look at specific areas or to conduct minor record reviews. This will be done over a day or two. OSEP will monitor Indiana in 2001-2002 with no specific dates known at this time.

The accountability legislation, P.L. 221, will begin to encompass many of the aspects of the CIM. This legislation requires reporting of school progress to the public. Progress and accountability must be at the building level and includes looking at ISTEP scores, attendance rates, drop out rates, graduation rates, etc. Special Education will no longer have a parallel system for monitoring and will be incorporated into what all schools must do.

Indiana has 92 indicators with 3 duplications. Twenty-six are reported from data in our office. Surveys have been developed for the locals to use or they may develop their own which addresses 19 indicators. A meeting to review the indicators further reduced the number of indicators by 11. Local districts only respond to 39 indicators.

Each district is compared to itself. Data is reviewed to determine if they are improving. This system of monitoring should not have any surprises because local districts are collecting and analyzing their own data. The local districts develop their own improvement plan before it comes to the Division by looking at performance indicators and data sources. The local districts may develop their own data sources. Each district must respond to how they select/collect and analyze the data; what is the result of the analysis; and what is the improvement plan? If the local district can't respond to those questions then they must address how they will respond in the future. Each indicator was reviewed by a monitoring consultant and then a letter and a copy of review notes

were sent back to the local district. The Division has analyzed the data to determine whether districts had trouble in collecting data or whether they had difficulty in analyzing the data in order to tailor the technical assistance they will receive from their monitoring consultant. Our challenge will be pulling out the data and reporting it in a meaningful way. The Advisory Council will take the information we already have and develop a report which is similar to the local reports. The Division will collect and synthesize data to be shared with the Advisory Council and then receive direction from the council on how the report will be completed.

Questions - David Schmidt asked about a questionnaire he received a few weeks ago. It was easy for him to fill out but general education teachers struggled and the parents and students didn't have a clue. Paul indicated the Division developed sample surveys for parents, students, staff and administrators. The surveys address 19 indicators. Local districts have a lot of latitude on how they implement the data collection. This works because they will only be compared to themselves. The surveys have been redone particularly to address the readability of the surveys.

David Schmidt asked about the exit surveys. Brett Bollinger indicated they were developed by a committee.

Brenda Alyea discussed, Building Partnerships, in a presentation about parent involvement. A goal of doing this research is to produce a state technical assistance document on this issue. This is a national issue. The national standards are from a document by Johns Hopkins University and address the areas of: communication, student learning, parenting, volunteering, school decision-making and collaborating. These issues also fit with the CIM process.

Becky Bowman provided a summary of a study on complaints. Part of the federal rules requires update of due process for hearings and complaints. Complaints are on the rise. High percentage of complaints is substantiated (70%). The number of hearings is misleading. The critical issue is how many go to hearing. The majority of hearings are dismissed because some sort of agreement is reached through mediation, a pre-hearing conference, case conference committee meeting, etc. Hearing numbers are going down. There doesn't seem to be any correlation in the decline of the number of hearings. However, we may be seeing an increase in the number of hearings for this year. We will have more mediations this year. The figures are based on a calendar year. The current database allows us to pull out the few early childhood issues but won't allow looking at other age ranges. Most of the complaint issues deal with IEPs not being implemented. Discipline issues are second. The rate of resolution for mediations indicates that 50% are resolved all or in part. The Division is involved with a due process study and will be evaluating Indiana's system to see what needs to be improved. The Division will be looking at developing procedures for complaints, mediations, and due process hearings.

Division update: Mike Bina, superintendent of the Indiana School for the Blind, has resigned. He will go to the Hadley School in Illinois. The School for the Deaf still has an acting superintendent and a search is underway. A study of the coop system is under review by a legislative committee.

Question from Terry Huser: Will ISD and ISB be combined as one campus? A consolidated campus with one superintendent? Response: No formal proposal has been made to this effect.

Special education roundtables have asked for assistance in training for autism and early childhood. Our office is working with OSEP on Indiana's eligibility. Article 7 has been reviewed and several areas have been identified for further analysis.

Question: What additional responsibilities will Bob have as a result of his promotion? Response: He will be responsible for gifted and talented programs as well.

We still need to have one more meeting for Advisory Council this year as required. A minimum of four meetings a year are required. Dates for the 2001-2002 year will be finalized at the June 8th meeting. Marcia Johnson and Brett Bollinger have indicated they would not be able to attend. Will leave the date as June 8 so it will fall within the state fiscal year. It will be held at the Five Seasons.

An appeal was made to send setters to your representatives in the Congress and Senates regarding appropriating the funding for special ed to the 40% level. This would have a significant fiscal impact. This issue needs to be put on the agenda in June for an update. Also there should be a report on where we are with personnel shortages and issues related to interpreters.

Julie Swaim met with John Merbler, Ball State University, who did not realize the issues with providing services to students with cochlear implants. Julie was invited to speak with a distance learning class. Unfortunately this was canceled because one individual had strong negative opinions about the issue so only one perspective was communicated in the class.

Indiana has resource issues related to providing the spectrum of services available for children who are hearing impaired. It is important to keep in mind what is best for the student.

Steve Wornhoff, Director at Boone-Clinton-NW Hendricks Joint Services, and Cheryl Corning, Director at Ripley-Ohio-Dearborn Special Education Cooperative, were appointed by ICASE to look at the issue of shortages of school psychologists.

The committee began by gathering data to compare Indiana to other states. Salary, average number of evaluations done in a year, number of school days a year, and mean number of hours in the school day were data that was collected from Indiana and surrounding states. Indiana's average salary is only above Kentucky. The average number of evaluations is 110 in Indiana and many have a higher number on their caseload. Additional data was gathered from special education directors and they did a survey of school psychologists. There was a high rate of return on the surveys. The survey results indicate that 8.2% of openings for school psychologists were unfilled. Projections for retirements in the future make the percentage higher. An estimated 45% were expected to retire in the next five years. Therefore, the shortage will become more critical in the future.

Some additional issues identified were the school psychologists felt they spend too much time on assessments and not other services. The training they receive doesn't match the job they do. There are three preparatory programs: at Indiana University, Ball State University, and Indiana State University. All are well respected programs. The focus is on Ph.D. programs and graduates

tend to have other options other than the schools. Valparaiso University also has a program, but it is small. The majority of students come from out of state and return to their home state at the completion of their degree. Indiana is viewed as a test and place state.

Recommendations: Roles should be expanded to include other activities such as consultation and counseling. More professional development available Expand options for sabbatical leave. Salary schedules need to expand to the Ed.S. or Ph.D. level. Provide insurance benefits to part-time school psychologists. Increase dialogue with university trainers

Help from Indiana Department of Education: Dialogue with universities to understand the shortage. Raise awareness of shortage to other state agencies and the legislature. Provide scholarships, sabbatical monies. Provide incentives for students to stay in Indiana. School should allow provision of services to all students not just those in special education. Provide opportunity for second year students or Masters level.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Marcia Johnson and seconded by Gary Bates and Debra Winchester. The meeting adjourned at 2:00p.m.